

**Statement by Gillian Dell, Transparency International  
to the UNCAC Implementation Review Group (IRG) Briefing for NGOs  
on 1 September 2020**

Honourable Chair, esteemed colleagues from States Parties, UNODC and other organisations,  
Many thanks for the opportunity to speak today at this first post-Covid remote IRG briefing for NGOs. My name is Gillian Dell and I work at the Transparency International Secretariat in Berlin.

Let me say at the outset – congratulations on the tenth anniversary of the start of the UNCAC review mechanism’s 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of reviews.

We thank the Secretariat for its presentation and commend its interesting and useful report on implementation of chapter II on prevention. While the report summarises only 42 reviews, the results provide important insights. I’d like to make two observations based on the report’s findings regarding implementation of UNCAC Article 12.

Paragraph 70 of the report says that

*Seven countries have established special registers for beneficial owners, which has been identified as a good practice.*

We welcome that beneficial ownership registers have been identified as a good practice, given their importance in the prevention, detection and investigation of corruption. We are concerned though that only seven countries of 42 have introduced them. And we urge this body to endorse the good practice of **public** registers of beneficial ownership, which have been introduced by an increasing number of countries.

Another of the report’s findings, in paragraph 71, says that

*Limited information has been provided regarding the public oversight of the use of **subsidies** by private entities and **licences** granted by public authorities for commercial activities. It has been recommended to promote transparency in this area.*

We welcome the recommendation of transparency. The finding is very troubling, especially in the context of the current pandemic when trillions of dollars in public financial support is going to the private sector. Additionally, it is well-known that the process of granting licences, including in the natural resources sector, is a high risk area for corruption. We urge the IRG and UNODC to undertake more in-depth study on how countries can improve in this area and for the IRG to hold discussions on this subject.

I would also like to make four brief points about UNCAC processes:

- **Subsidiary bodies.** Ten years after civil society groups first learned that they were not invited as observers to the IRG - and nine years after the Marrakesh compromise that led to this briefing on the margins of the IRG, we continue to ask ourselves – how does it serve this body and its aims for it to meet behind closed doors?

- **Transparency and inclusion in country reviews is key.** At national level, the country reviews can stimulate public interest and support if a cross-section of civil society is informed and involved. That calls for much public outreach about the process, including publication of timetables, full country reports and follow-up plans.
- **Follow-up is key.** Experience with other review mechanisms shows that a follow-up process plays an important role in keeping implementation on the agenda and increasing focus on commitments. It is a matter of real concern that there has been no follow-up to the first cycle which started in 2010. This follow-up should include extensive public outreach.
- **Finally, the slow pace of the second cycle** is also a matter of great concern. The result is that the UNCAC review process is losing momentum and needs a major injection of political will if it is to succeed.

We thank UNODC and States Parties once again for holding this briefing and providing civil society organisations the opportunity to provide input about UNCAC implementation and the review process.